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KANSAS
COMMANDERY,
M. O. L. L. U. S.

WAR PAPER.

(II.)

WHAT I SAW AND DID

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF

REBEL PRISONS.

A PAPER

PREPARED AND READ BEFORE THE

KANSAS COMMANDERY

OF THE

M. O. L. L. U. S.

BY COMPANION

O. R. McNARY,

1st Lieutenant 103d Penna. Vols.

By Transfer.

WHAT I SAW AND DID INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF REBEL PRISONS.

Commander and Companions:

Some time ago I received a communication from our worthy Recorder, requesting me to read a paper, and suggesting that I relate some of my experiences as a prisoner of war. Long ago I learned to obey my superiors; but what shall I write? If of prison life, of what part of it? The treatment of prisoners by the rebels during the war, is an old story; you have doubtless all read it; it is an important part of the history of the late war, and the blackest page in the book. Being a very modest young man, I have heretofore declined to recite my personal experience in public. It is too much like blowing my own horn. But some one has said: "He that bloweth not his own horn, verily, his horn shall not be blown." And as I happen to have the horn, I will tell you part of what I saw and did, inside and outside of rebel prisons.

In April, 1864, I was a staff officer, and acting superintendent of negro affairs at Plymouth, North Carolina, and with Major Marvin, — now a citizen of Lawrence, Kansas, — was recruiting negro troops. Plymouth was the advance post of the extreme left wing of the Army of the James, commanded by General H. W. Wessells.

Early in April our scouts informed us that a strong force was coming down to drive us out, or — take us in. On the 17th of April, we were attacked by a rebel force of over 10,000 men, under command of General Hoke and General Ransom.

On the third day of the siege, a citizen, Mr. Johnston, who lived near our picket line, came to me with the interesting information, that the rebel Provost Marhal, had offered a reward of $10,000 each, for Major Marvin and myself, dead or alive, and that our negroes would be shot at sight. I immediately sent him to notify Major Marvin, and I informed General Wessells.

We had read a copy of the joint resolution of the rebel congress, approved May 1, 1863, section 4 of which read as follows, viz: "That every white person being a commissioned officer or acting as such, who, during the present war, shall command negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States, or who shall arm, train, organize, or prepare negroes or mulattoes for military service against the Confederate States, or who shall voluntarily aid negroes or mulattoes in any military enterprise, attack or conflict in such service, shall be deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and shall, if captured, be put to death, or be otherwise punished at the discretion of the court." Section 7 of the same act provides like punishment for negroes or mulattoes taken in arms.

While Mr. Johnston's information did not change our status, it did give us cause to fear that the rebels intended to enforce the law in our cases, and did not add to our peace of mind. General Wessells suggested, that as we were about out of ammunition, we should send our negroes across the river into the swamp after dark, and that Major Marvin and I should follow them at the proper time, and try to make our way to our gun-boats then in Albemarle Sound. But "the best laid plans of mice and men aft gang aglee." A majority of the negroes refused to leave us, and just before day-light next morning, in a dense fog, while placing a section of the 24th New York Battery, I was wounded in the leg and captured. About 9 o'clock, what was left of our small force surrendered. I was then compelled to witness a sight which will remain a disgrace to the confederate authorities, and a reproach to General Hoke and General Ransom, for all time. Immediately after our men surrendered, the rebel soldiers commenced firing

on the negroes, shooting them down, old and young, wherever they found them; some ran for the timber and were pursued by Dearing's Cavalry and shot as they ran. I saw two loyal white citizens, an old man and his wife, both shot, by order of a rebel Lieutenant, while standing in their own door.

In the afternoon General Hoke inquired of General Wessells what had become of Colonel Marvin and Major McNary who were stealing and drilling negroes? The General told him, they had taken their negroes to Roanoke Island. He had introduced me as his aide-de-camp. Major Marvin had been a Lieutenant in the 85th. New York, and had taken his place with the company. I did not feel comfortable, however, with the General, and in company with the rebel officers, and as soon as I could get an opportunity, I went to the men and kept out of sight as much as possible.

Next morning the prisoners,—2197,—not including the wounded, were formed in open order, faced inward, and five rebel soldiers marched through between our lines and looked every man in the face. They were followed by a rebel Major and a Miss Norkum, on horse back. Miss Norkum and her mother lived inside our lines and had often received orders from me, on our commissary, for provisions. She was well acquainted with me, and slightly acquainted with Major Marvin. When I saw her I supposed it was all up with us; they rode down one line and back the other. I raised my head and looked her full in the face, until she passed. I did not intend to look pleasant. I supposed I was about to be betrayed by a woman whom I had befriended, but for whom, just then, I felt the utmost contempt. She looked me straight in the eye for a few seconds as she came towards me, and then turned away her face. She did not betray me.

We were marched to Tarboro, packed in box cars, and started south. At Wilmington, immense piles of confederate cotton lay close to the rail road track, and as the train moved out I placed a lighted match in a bale of cotton. "The Charleston Courier" said, the Yankee prisoners—Plymouth Pilgrims — set fire to the cotton yards at Wilmington, and destroyed

$5,000,000 worth of confederate cotton,—that the scoundrels who started the fire should be roasted alive. From that time, until this day, we have been known among prisoners as the Plymouth Pilgrims.

We arrived at Andersonville on the 30th of April. I shall not attempt a description of Andersonville prison. Abler pens than mine have tried in vain to paint the picture. The horrible sensation experienced by the captive, when the creaking gates of a Southern prison closed behind him can neither be fully imagined nor described; from that hour his fate was veiled in impenetrable gloom, to which time added the blackness of darkness, until the last ray of hope was well nigh shut out forever. He was forsaken by his Government, whose protecting care he had a right to expect. He was shut out from friends and home, and his appeals for relief were alike unheeded by friends and foes. He was exposed to the burning sun of summer and the icy blasts of winter, with no bed except the earth, with no covering save the clouds of the sky, parched with thirst and mad with hunger, often destitute of hat or shoes, without clothing to cover his nakedness, tortured with flies and vermin by day and by night, even his comrades powerless to help. He was doomed to suffer a living death through weary days and nights, weeks and months. The horrors of that life no pen can describe nor tongue can tell.

After a short sojourn at Andersonville and a fruitless effort on my part to escape, I was taken to Macon, Ga., where the rest of our commissioned officers had preceded me. On the way from the city to our camp, under guard, we passed two young ladies going to see the Yankees; one of them handed me a bouquet of magnolias. As I had been without anything to eat for 48 hours, I had my appetite with me, and immediately proceeded to reduce the supply of rebel commissary stores on hand. Years ago Byron wrote:

> "All human history attests,
> That happiness for man—the hungry sinner
> Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner."

While I was eating, Col. Maxwell found a note concealed in my flowers, which read as follows, viz, after giving street and number: "You have our sympathy; if you can escape come to our house, and we will assist you. (Signed,) *Loyal* Maggie Langley." We were provided with tents, and encamped on what had been a fair-ground, and guarded by the 1st Georgia Infantry, commanded by Col. Devenport. They were mostly Germans and had been prisoners in our hands in the early part of the war. They gave us good rations and treated us well. But the few days in this camp was the one sunny spot, the oasis in the desert of our prison life.

On the 17th of May we were marched inside of a stockade, newly constructed for the confinement of officers; it contained about two and one-half acres, surrounded by a stockade fence sixteen feet high, near the top of which projected a guard walk. Fifteen feet inside of the stockade was the dead-line, an ordinary picket-fence. On the same day 800 officers were brought in from Richmond. We were divided into squads of 100 and each squad assigned a certain space of bare ground, 60 by 150 feet. 101 officers were captured at Plymouth, and we became squad six.

The only shelter inside the stockade was an old, one-story frame building, designated the hospital. The prisoners generally formed messes of from four to eight, who bunked and lived together; each one in turn was mess-cook for two days, and one was house-keeper or police for the same time; it was the duty of the house-keeper to police the quarters and guard the rations and other property of the mess, a necessary precaution, as you may learn further on.

The officer highest in rank among the prisoners was designated commanding officer inside the stockade, and he was required to detail an officer to act as Quartermaster.

The rebel officers would hold no communication with any one, except the officer in command or the Quartermaster. For some time General Wessells was in command, and I was Quartermaster. The officer highest in rank in each squad was commandlng officer of the squad. An officer was detailed

each morning as officer of the day, and he in turn would detail a police-squad to police the camp. You are not to understand however that rank counted for anything or was any advantage to the prisoner. The General was esteemed no better than the Lieutenant; each one did police duty, did their own washing, and every one scrutinized his own garments in search of the ever present *pediculus corporis*.

Our rations were one pint of unbolted corn-meal, often ground cob and all, one table spoonful of rice or black peas, one tea spoonful of salt, and about twice a week we received about five ounces of bacon and skippers mixed.

We were not furnished any cooking utensils, and were obliged to use tin cups, flat stones or a piece of an old canteen. Our mess of six paid fifty dollars for a dutch-oven and were better equipped than any in the stockade at that time. Our rations were delivered to the Quartermaster in bulk, and by him issued to each squad, which— by the way— was perhaps the most difficult and thankless duty I ever tried to perform. We had no scales, and no measure except a tin cup, and if perchance one squad received an ounce less meal or rice than some other squad, or a piece of bacon with more than the regulation amount of skippers, or if it smelled a little stronger than what their neighbor got, they would talk to me in language — not taught in Sunday schools; and when I tried to resign, the General told me that I could stand abuse better than any one he knew.

Captain W. K. Tabb, a very mean specimen of the Home Guard, was in command of the prison. We were guarded by Militia or Home Guards, boys from 12 to 17, and old men too feeble for service in the field. We had a process of initiation, and regular grades of promotion. For the first three months a prisoner was called a fresh fish, the next two months a pickled herring, then for two months a dried cod, and the balance of his time a smoked herring.

The entrance to the prison was through a gate at one corner of the stockade; a bell gave notice when the gate was about to be opened, and I was required to go immediately to

the gate and ascertain what was wanted. If a fresh arrival of prisoners, I would count them and show them to their quarters. On all such occasions I was required to wear my coat and shoulder-straps; not one in fifty of the prisoners wore a coat, and but few, more than two garments,—many only shirt and drawers.

The sound of the bell would attract attention, and immediately on the appearance of a new arrival of prisoners, almost every man would yell "fresh fish, fresh fish," and rush for the gate; before the new-comer would be thirty feet inside the gate, his way was blocked, and he found himself surrounded by two thousand smoke-begrimed, sun-burned, lank, lousy creatures, such as he had never seen or imagined before. The reception disgusted some and frightened others; for instance—one morning Col. Sherman and Captain Brackinridge came in; they were both neatly dressed in new clean, artillery uniforms. They were immediately surrounded by, what to them seemed to be, a vast mob of wild savages or lunatics, yelling "fresh fish, fresh fish, come out of that hat, I want his boots, keep your hand out of his pocket; oh, but they are dandies, let me kiss him for his mother, don't put lice on them yet, give them air, etc." As I made my way through the crowd, they noticed my shoulder-straps; the Colonel laid his hand on my shoulder, and said: "My dear Sir, will you be kind enough to show us the officers' quarters." His request caused a laugh, and increased the confusion. I told them that every man they saw was an officer. Just then Col. Lagrange who was well acquainted with Col. Sherman, came up; he had just washed his shirt and left it to dry and had nothing on but his pantaloons. He addressed Col. Sherman and extended his hand, but Sherman drew back. I told him it was Col. Lagrange in command of squad nine, to go with him and he would furnish them quarters.

We had three Chaplains in prison with us, and had religious service three times a week; the chaplains would pray for the success of our army, for the President of the United States, for the destruction of the rebel army and downfall of

the Confederacy, etc. This was not agreeable to Capt. Tabb, and he issued an order forbidding all prayers; nevertheless the prayers went on as usual. One evening when we were assembled for service, Captain Tabb marched in at the head of about one hundred armed men. Chaplain White of the 5th Rhode Island was standing on a stump conducting the service; Chaplain Dickson of the 16th Connecticut and Chaplain Whitney of the 104th Ohio, and about one thousand men were standing close around, singing. Tabb halted his men and made his way through the crowd to the stump; as soon as the singing ceased, he asked Chaplain White if he had read his order prohibiting prayer, and announced that if his order was violated there would not be a damned Chaplain alive inside of ten minutes. Chaplain White replied: "Sir, we recognize that we are prisoners of war, that as such it is our duty to obey all reasonable orders in relation to our persons. But you have no right, and can exercise no control over our consciences; in all such matters we will exercise our own judgment regardless of consequences; we will obey God rather than man,"—and immediately commenced one of the most eloquent prayers that I ever heard; he prayed for the success of the armies of the United States, and for the return of peace, when no rebel flag should be permitted to appear in the land, and for the destruction of the rebel army and the rebel government, and concluded by praying for Captain Tabb, whom he believed to be one of the chief of sinners. In the mean time two-thirds of all the prisoners had joined the crowd; almost every one had provided himself with a brickbat, a stone or a piece of wood, and when Captain Tabb looked around soon after the Chaplain commenced his prayer, he saw Lieut. Richardson close beside him on the right, Col. Hanson on his left, and Col. Maxwell in front of him, each one with a brick in his hands, and himself packed in the crowd, so that he could not get out; he also saw his soldiers surrounded by more than a thousand determined men, armed with clubs, stones or bricks; when he undertook to move, Col. Hanson simply raised his hand in which he held the brick, and mo-

tioned to him to stand still; every thing was still and quiet until the prayer was ended, then Chaplain White at once stepped down beside Tabb and said to him: "Captain, our services are over, and whenever you wish to leave we will escort you to the gate, and we will be glad to have you and your men attend our services often." Tabb replied: "That was a damned smart prayer, Chaplain, but it won't answer the purpose," and immediately started for the gate with White, Maxwell and Hanson as escort; as he approached his men he ordered them, left face, and marched them out. No further attempts were made to prevent prayers.

About this time the rebels discovered three tunnels, and Capt. Tabb issued an order that all prisoners not in ranks at roll-call would be shot down by the sentinels. In consequence of this order, men unable to walk without assistance were obliged to stand in the hot sun, often for an hour at a time. About the 18th of June, Capt. Tabb was relieved, and Capt Gibbs was placed in command of the Prison.

On the evening of the 4th of July, roll-call was repeated several times, and we were kept standing in line for over two hours. After roll-call Capt. Todd of the 8th New Jersey displayed a small, knit silk U. S. flag, four by six inches which had been knit and presented to him by Miss Paradise of Jersey City. It was at once hailed with three cheers. The demonstration alarmed the prison authorities, the long-roll was beaten and all prison guards were ordered out under arms. The prisoners organized a meeting in the hospital building which was opened by prayer, speeches were made and songs sung. But in the midst of it while Col. Thorp was speaking, Capt. Gibbs marched a regiment of troops inside the stockade, and ordered every man to his quarters. We had no alternative and obeyed his order.

Our mess of six had made arrangements for a good 4th of July dinner. Our bill of fare was fresh beef, $8.00 per pound, butter $6.00 per pound, sweet potatoes, green peas, blackberries, green cucumbers, soft bread, tea, sugar, salt, vinegar and pepper, at a total cost of $136.00, or $28.00 each.

To prevent tunneling, Capt. Gibbs issued the following order, viz:

SPECIAL ORDER / No. 6. \ C. S. MILITARY PRISON, *Macon, Ga., June 22, 1864.*

Sentinels are instructed to shoot down all prisoners in the future who are seen moving about camp after taps.

GEO. G. GIBBS,
Captain Commanding.

When you consider that four out of five of the prisoners had diarrhœa, and that the sinks were at the extreme corner of the stockade, you can have some idea of the effect of such an order. On the 22d day of May, Lieut. H. P. Baker of the 1st Rhode Island Cavalry was shot and severely wounded by a sentinel, a boy about 14 years of age. He was standing by a tree twenty feet from the dead-line when shot. I presume the shot was intended for me, as I was walking between Baker and the dead-line at the time. On the evening of the 11th of June, Lieut. Otto Grierson of the 46th New York, was shot and mortally wounded while at the spring for water. On the 16th an officer, whose name I have forgotten, was shot at the gate while going out with a squad for wood: he was taken to a hospital outside and died.

On or about the 25th of July, General Stoneman left Atlanta with a division of Cavalry for the purpose of relieving the prisoners at Macon, destroying railroads, etc., and with ordinary good generalship should have succeeded. The rebels, however, seemed to know more about the intended raid than many of the officers who took part in it, and transferred the prisoners to Savannah and Charleston. Lieut. George S. Hastings of the 24th New York Battery, and myself, adopted a plan to escape by concealing ourselves under the Hospital building until the prisoners were taken out of the stockade, and then escape. Capt. D. W. Olcott of the 134th New York, and Lieut. Cane of the 104th New York adopted a similar plan. On the night of the 29th of July the last of the prisoners were taken out, and Capt. Olcott, Lieut. Cane and myself —left. By some mishap Hastings was left behind and cap-

tured. After an interesting and hazardous pilgrimage of nineteen days we were re-captured by dogs, and confined in jail at Madison, Ga. After being there thirty hours I again escaped—Olcott and Cane being too sick to travel—and after four days was again captured with dogs, when within eight miles of Sherman's lines, and was again taken to Madison, and from there together with Olcott and Cane taken to Agusta, Ga., where by order of the Provost-Marshal — a degenerate son of Governor Bradford of Maryland — I was heavily ironed and confined in a dungeon for nine days, as an outlaw, and fed on about six ounces of dry corn bread and a pint tin cupfull of water a day.

The heavy iron shackle riveted immediately over the wound on my leg, —which, owing to scurvy and exposure while attempting to escape, had become an angry sore,— caused intense pain, which together with my miserable surroundings and insufficient food, speedily reduced my strength both physically and mentally. After repeated messages sent by the old negro who brought my bread and water once a day, the sheriff condescended to come and see me. In reply to my earnest appeal for relief, he said he could do nothing for me, that I was charged with being an outlaw and a spy, and that he was only obeying the orders of the Provost-Marshal. He finally agreed, however, to send a note to General Wright, the rebel officer in command at Augusta, and furnished me paper and pencil wherewith to write it. In this note I stated that I was an officer of the United States Army, and was heavily ironed and confined in a dungeon, that I was sick and wounded and unless soon relieved I must die. On receipt of my note, the General sent a rebel surgeon to see me who ordered my irons to be cut off at once, and conducted me into the presence of General Wright and Captain Bradford, the Provost-Marshal. In reply to the General's inquiry, Bradford said I was an outlaw, that I had escaped from every place where I had been confined, and was charged with being a spy. The General allowed me to plead my own cause, and I soon convinced him that I was neither an outlaw nor a spy. He said he did

not approve of the ill treatment of prisoners of war; that this was the second time he had found Capt. Bradford guilty of cruelty to prisoners, and that if it occurred again he would relieve him and have him ordered to the front. He then sent me to the back yard to wash, sent a negro to a restaurant for a good dinner for me, gave me a drink of brandy and sugar, sent for the surgeon to dress my leg, and after a lengthy and interesting discussion in relation to the war, he sent me back to jail, where Olcott, Cane and four other prisoners were confined in a large room on the second floor. After two days we were all sent to Charleston and confined in the jail yard, under fire of our batteries on Morris Island. Perhaps there was no rebel prison where there was more consolidated misery to the square inch than Charleston jail-yard. It was surrounded on three sides by a wall eighteen feet high, the jail and workhouse forming one side of the inclosure. Everything was in the most filthy condition imaginable. The ground was literally covered with vermin. A fellow-prisoner has said, it was the nastiest, dirtiest, filthiest, lousiest place he was ever in.

We are told that as one of the great plagues of Egypt, "the dust of the land became lice." I do not know that the sand in Charleston became lice, but I do know that millions of them were in the sand. At the risk of being thought impolite, I have taken the liberty to "borrow" part of a poem written by a fellow-prisoner, which I have modernized to suit this paper, viz:

> "Of prison lice to us the direful spring
> Of woes unnumbered, heavenly muses sing."
> *Homer modernized.*

Think not my theme so trifling; none that you can mention
Receives, in prison, half so much attention.
He who so lazy, so busy, or so nice,
Neglects to give an hour or two each day to lice,
Would be beset with troubles great and small,
And have hard scratching to get along at all.
If poets write of battles 'twixt frogs and mice,
Why not of skirmishes 'twixt men and lice?

And while these verses rude we are inditing,
Look 'round to see the different styles of fighting.

Sisera, a great warrior, was slain by Jael,
With those unwarlike weapons, a hammer and a nail,
While to slay these parasites, so pestiferously accused,
Although there be no hammer, two nails are always used.

Watch Pugilisticus, how he in a trice,
Pulls off his dirty shirt and pants, to fight his lice.

Mark now Gallantricus, that nice young man,
With taper fingers made to wield a ladies' fan,
Much disgusted, see him hunting, half ashamed of being seen,
Thinks it "very unpretty," lice should stay in shirts so clean.
See now his handsome visage, what contortions and grimaces,
As if to scare the nasty things by making ugly faces.
What would she think, his would-be future spouse,
To see him strip and squat and grin and louse?

Here he ceased scratching lines, to scratch "scotch fiddle tunes"
At something crawling in his shirt and pantaloons.

We were without shelter; a few fragments of tents were occupied by General Stoneman and his officers, but they were soon cut to pieces and made into clothing by the old prisoners who were destitute.

Six hundred prisoners were in the yard when we arrived, and every foot of space seemed to be occupied; Lieutenant Hammond, an old friend and neighbor, divided quarters with me for the time being. That night a prisoner died of yellow fever, and I took his place. It was directly under an old gallows which stood near the east wall. Prisoners who had been there some time told me that three men had died there of yellow fever, and advised me not to stay; they seemed to have a superstitious notion that it was a fatal place. I dug up the sand to the depth of six or eight inches, throwing the fresh sand on top and held my claim. This was the nearest I ever came to the gallows.

Our rations were about two pounds of flour and three pints of corn meal for five days, issued all at one time; none

of our party, and but few of the prisoners, had any cooking utensils, and no way to keep our rations, except in our pockets. We were furnished six barrels of water a day for six hundred men, and very little wood.

My friend Richardson suggested that we were so near hell, we did not need much fuel.

The jail was a large four story building, the ground floor was occupied by civil convicts, the second story by rebel officers and soldiers under punishment for military offenses, and the third and fourth stories by our negro prisoners of war. In the jail and work-house they used a number of large cast iron spittoons with loose lids, which the prisoners in the jail carried down into the yard each morning to wash. While Lieut. Cane entertained the guard with an Irish story, I buried one of the spittoons in the sand, and as soon as they left I dug it up, washed it out and used it to cook in.

Every evening our negro prisoners entertained us by singing songs, in a manner rarely surpassed. One of their favorite songs was written by Sergeant Johnson of the 55th Massachusetts, colored: I can now recite but two verses of the chorus, viz:

Now we're weeping sad and lonely,
Oh, how bad I feel;
Away down in Charleston, South Car'lina,
Praying for a good square meal.
Now I'm hungry, lousy, naked,
But we'll starve or fight,
To defend the starry banner sacred,
Or die for the cause of right.

Most of their songs were either original or parodies, and no one with a grain of patriotism or music in his soul, who heard them, will ever forget them; strong men wept, and the camp was hushed to listen.

Early in September we had one of the most fearful thunder storms that I ever witnessed; cold rain beat down on us in torrents during the day and night. The yard was level and without drainage, and before morning the water was five

or six inches deep. Through this flood we were compelled to walk continually to keep up circulation. Two-hundred pounder shells from our batteries on Morris Island, — one every fifteen or twenty minutes — passed over us or exploded near us ; several times fragments came inside the yard. Yet it is a singular fact that while a number of the rebel soldiers guarding us, and at least three of their officers were killed by these shells, not one of our prisoners was seriously injured. During September large numbers of our prisoners died with yellow fever. The Rebel Captain commanding the prison and his adjutant both died in one night. But

> "No grief so great but runneth to an end,
> No hap so hard but will in time amend."

So we sang, when about the first of October we marched out of the jail yard, and were transferred to Camp Sorghum near Columbia, South Carolina, — a transition, however, which forcibly reminded me of Satan's soliloquy :

> "Which way I fly is hell ; myself an hell :
> And in the lowest deeps, a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide."

We were kept under guard in an open field without shelter, and like Nebuchadnezzar of old, turned out to grass. Our ration was the usual pint of corn meal, and very filthy sorghum molasses, which to men in our condition at that time was about as nourishing as a diet of Epsom salts, hence the name Camp Sorghum.

In view of the approaching presidential election the rebels were anxious to get an expression of our sentiments. They proposed to furnish paper for ballots, and publish the result in the city papers, if we would hold an election, hoping doubtless, the result would be good news to send to their friends in the north. Our election was held in due form, and the result was ten hundred and sixty-four for Lincoln and one hundred and three for McClellan. The rebels were disappointed and cursed us bitterly. The papers made no mention of our election.

The only ration of meat issued to us at Columbia issued itself: an old wild hog chanced to pass the guard line, and as soon as he came within range, several hundred starving men gave him a hearty welcome: "he was a stranger, and they took him in."

> When the black hog was seen on a run through the camp,
> Each soldier forgot his weakness and cramp.
> The grunts of the hog and his running were vain—
> His form will ne'er darken that camp ground again.

For two weeks I had been quite sick and was no longer able to stand or walk, and my wound had become infected with gangrene. With the assistance of Lieut. Saul of the 25th Massachusetts, who gave me an order to the hospital, which, he said, he had *borrowed* from a man who had no further use for it, I was sent to the First South Carolina rebel hospital, in charge of Dr. Geo. R. C. Todd — Mrs. Lincoln's brother - where I spent the last month of my prison life. I would like to tell you something about this hospital, but this paper is already too long.

At the risk of being tiresome, however, I desire to say a few words in defense of prisoners of war generally. In what I have said I have given you the bright side of prison life.

We had with us in prison, men of every conceivable grade of society; and no condition in life so fully developed a man's true character. We had men, and officers, who would condescend to act as spies for the rebels, or render them any servile service to obtain their favor. They would apologize for being in the service, and curse the government they had sworn to defend. I know some of them well, and am not afraid to name them if called on. This class were always well provided for by the rebels. They were generally paroled and given a comfortable place outside the prison pen. If kept inside, where they acted as spies, they were not attached to any squad or mess, but were well supplied with ham, eggs, milk, and soft bread. We had two of them with us at Macon, one an officer of a Missouri regiment and the other of a Penn

sylvania regiment; a committee notified them that it might become necessary to stop their wind; next day they were taken out and boarded up-town. They are the class of ex-prisoners, who are ever ready to proclaim that prisoners of war, as such, are not entitled to any special consideration. They were disloyal while prisoners, and are traitors to their comrades to-day. Thank God there were but few of them. Prisoners soon became excessively selfish; self-preservation compelled them. If one had money, and a comrade was starving, he dare not spend his money to relieve him, as it was only a question of time when he would need it to save his own life.

Our prison life did not all consist in loss of liberty, in subjection to the control of cruel enemies, in insufficient food, in scant clothing, in an exposed life, in the absence of all conveniences of living. God knows all these are bad enough. But to persons of any culture, isolation adds much to his misery.

> "The dreary void,
> The leafless desert of the mind,
> The waste of feelings unemployed."

The world, friends, fellow-citizens and home, were things as remote as though in another sphere. The prisoner preserved affections and interest without being able to indulge them; and thus with quickening pulse he dismissed continually the dove for the expected emblem, but it returns forever, with flagging wing and drooping head, not having found whereon to rest its weary foot. Thus there comes despair, and from despair comes always degradation. Men became reckless, because hopeless, brutalized, because broken-spirited, until from disregard of the formalities of life they became indifferent to its duties, and passed with rapid though almost insensible steps from indecorum to vice, until a man would pick your pocket in prison, who would sooner cut his own throat at home.

Perhaps the best description of the condition of our prisoners in the summer of 1864 that has been written by any one, is the report of an inspection and investigation, made by Surgeon Joseph Jones, by order of the rebel Surgeon General. Jones was a bitter rebel, and an eminent physician and surgeon, which makes his report all the more valuable. I have only time for a short extract from it in this paper, viz: "Large numbers of the federal prisoners appeared to be utterly disgusted with Indian corn. Those who were so disgusted with this form of food that they had no appetite to partake of it, except in quantities insufficient to supply the waste of the tissues, were of course in the condition of men slowly starving. In such cases, an urgent feeling of hunger was not a prominent symptom; and although it existed at first, it soon disappeared, and was succeeded by an actual loathing of food. In this state the muscular strength was rapidly diminished, the tissues wasted, and their thin skeleton-like forms moved about with the appearance of utter exhaustion and dejection. The mental condition connected with long confinement with the most miserable surroundings, and with no hope for the future, also depressed all the nervous and vital actions, and was especially active in destroying the appetite. The effects of mental depression and of defective nutrition, were manifested not only in the slow, feeble motions of the wasted, skeleton-like forms, but also in such lethargy, listlessness and torpor of the mental faculties as rendered those unfortunate men oblivious and indifferent to their afflicted condition. In many cases, even of the greatest apparent suffering and distress, instead of showing any anxiety to communicate the causes of their distress, or to relate their privations, and their longing for their homes and friends, they lay in a listless lethargic, uncomplaining state, taking no notice either of their own distressed condition, or of the gigantic mass of human misery by which they were surrounded. Nothing appalled and depressed me so much as this silent, uncomplaining misery."

We have been amazed at the great number who have no proper conception of what it was, to be a prisoner of war, or of the true history of rebel prison-life—or rather death in rebel prisons—and who profess to believe that prisoners were out of danger and much less exposed than their comrades in the front. These men would like to have people believe that prisoners had a pleasant time, in fact that a rebel prison-pen was a desirable place for soldiers, and was sought for as a haven of rest and shelter from the storm of battle.

Men who make such assertions must be either wilfully ignorant or shamefully perverse. Authentic statistics show that the total number of men captured by the rebels was, 188,145; number actually confined in rebel prisons 94,072: number who died while prisoners of war 55,910, or 59.43 per cent., or 60 per cent. in round numbers — of those confined for thirty days or over never reached their homes.

"They fell where they wearied,
And lie where they fell."

Now compare the mortality of prisoners of war with the risk of life in the field, viz: Total number of men received into the service of the United States during the war 2,335,951; total number killed in action or who died from wounds received in action 86,761, or 3.75 per cent. 213,675 died from disease or unknown causes, making the entire mortality of the army, — not including prisoners of war, — 300,437, or 12.86 per cent., and 46.57 per cent less then the risk of life in rebel prisons. Again, 121,896 or 5.21 per cent. of the army in the field deserted or took the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States, while only 3,161 out of 188,145 or 1.68 per cent. of those who were captured, deserted or took the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States.

Now let those who will, call us "camp-followers," "cowards," or "skulkers." In defense, however, of the memory of 50,000 comrades who lie buried in Southern prison graves, I protest. Such slanders come with a bad grace from men who

should know what these men were. The loyal heroes who could have purchased their lives and their liberty with a pledge of allegiance to the Confederate States, who literally suffered and died a horrible death in order that their government might live, stand to-day as monuments of surpassing heroism and manly loyalty, worthy of admiration and commendation during all coming time.

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